

In the early days of the American colonies, silver currency was as scarce as paper was in the last year of grace. We are told that in the seventeenth century, in New England, taxes were paid in beef, pork, cheese, or such like; in one town, in milk-pails. In Delaware, debts were, at times, paid in pumpkins; in Pennsylvania, the principal kinds of produce were legal tenders; in Massachusetts, in 1635, the General Court made musket balls current for a farthing apiece (however, "noe man was compelled to take above 12d. att a tyme, in them"). Rice was the prevailing currency in South Carolina: but in Maryland and Virginia, from a very early period until many years after the Revolution, the pound of tobacco was the unit of value—debts and taxes, and fines and penalties, were calculated in it and paid by it. The charges of innkeepers were thus fixed, in 1699, by a law of Maryland: "Every ordinary-keeper that shall demand or take above 10 lbs. of tobacco for a gallon of small beer, 20 lbs. of tobacco for a gallon of strong beer, 4 lbs. for a night's lodging in a bed, 12 lbs. for a peck of Indian corn or oats, 6 lbs. for a night's grass for a horse, 10 lbs. for a night's hay or straw, shall forfeit for every offence 500 lbs. of tobacco." No one could sell, in that province (under that law), any cider, quince-drink, or other strong liquor, to be drunk in his or her house, under penalty of 1,000 lbs. of tobacco for every conviction. The following clause in the same act would be a perfect godsend to the bummers and deadbeats of this nineteenth century; it was: "No ordinary-keeper shall refuse to credit any person capable of giving a vote for election of delegates in any county, for any accommodations by him vended, to the value of 400 lbs. of tobacco, under the penalty of 400 lbs. of tobacco."

A magistrate presuming to join persons in holy wedlock, when there was a minister in the parish, was, under the laws of 1700, subjected to a fine of 5,000 lbs. of tobacco. In the same province, and under the same law, and for the encouragement of able ministers, instead of tithes, a tax of 40 lbs. of tobacco per poll was, yearly, levied on every taxable person in every parish.

In Virginia, it was enacted, in 1632: "Because of the low price of tobacco at present, it is further granted and ordered that there shall be likewise due to the mynisters, from the first day of March last past, for and during the term of one whole year next ensueinge, the twentyeth calfe, the twentyeth kidd of goats, and